

Consideration of the dedication of the Kokiwanee Nature Preserve in Wabash County

The proposed Nature Preserve is a 132.89 acre property that is in the central portion of Wabash County, approximately 2.0 miles southeast of the town of Lagro. This nature preserve protects an example of a high quality, biologically diverse landscape with old growth forests, natural springs, and waterfalls, along with south-facing bluffs and cliffs on calcareous bedrock along the Wabash River and located within the Bluffton Till Plain Section of the Central Till Plain Natural Region.

This Nature Preserve consists of topography that is characterized by glacial activity with a remarkably diverse landscape of contrasting plant communities whose distributions closely mirror specific sets of geologic conditions and modern ground-water processes. The Salamonie River originated as an ice-marginal channel along the Salamonie Moraine. The river drained a vast area and was subject to torrential flows of meltwater. The gorge originated suddenly in response to the downcutting of the Wabash Valley by the Maumee Torrent and the gradual upstream retreat of a large waterfall. The prominent tributary waterfalls are relicts of a higher stream level when the Salamonie River flowed on the same resistant limestone layer but broke through leaving them 'stranded' as hanging valleys.

For forty years Kokiwanee was operated as a Girl Scout Camp, introducing thousands of girls to an appreciation of nature. ACRES Land Trust worked to protect this large parcel of undeveloped land that is a refuge for plants and animals.

Natural communities this nature preserves protects, include cedar glades along the bluff, calcareous fens, seepage bogs, till-plain forests with more than 20 major canopy species on rich soils, and riparian areas along the river and the tributary streams.

This tract is owned and managed by ACRES Land Trust.

The Division of Nature Preserves recommends dedication of this site as a State Nature Preserve.

Attached is Nature Preserves exhibit A.

